

# The Canadian Reader

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## WILSON'S MOON

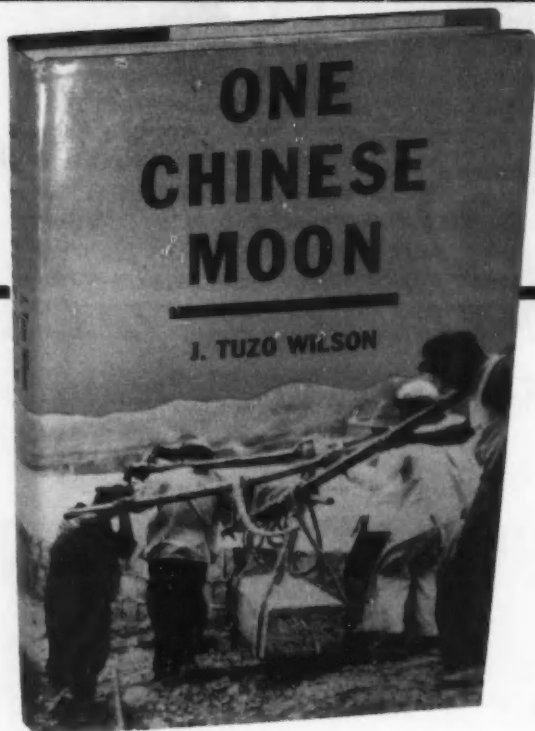
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## LAYTON'S SUN



by

J. Tuzo Wilson

Readers'

Club

February

Selection

*with 15 photographs*

"Forgive me for venturing to suggest any alterations in the magnificent plans you have made for me. I am sure that you will know and arrange what is best. If I overreach myself, it is only because I so much appreciate the chance to see this wonderful country and desire to use my limited time to the best advantage; but would you not rather show me Sian and Lanchow than the westernized cities of the coast? Surely you regard them as relics of a foreign, decadent and now vanished imperialism?"

This charming speech, delivered over leisurely cups of tea in a Peking restaurant, typifies the attitude Dr. J. Tuzo Wilson adopted towards his Chinese hosts. As President of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, Professor Wilson visited Communist China late in the summer of 1958. The official aim of his visit was the inspection of Chinese geophysical facilities and the establishment of contacts with Chinese scientists in his field. His unofficial aim was to see as much and learn as much of China as he could during his month-long visit — his "one Chinese moon."

Thus, when his hosts offered him the standard coastal tour, he told them politely but firmly that it was the interior he wanted to

**John Tuzo Wilson** grew up in Ottawa, studied at the University of Toronto, Princeton, and Cambridge where he earned his D.Sc. In World War II Dr. Wilson served overseas as an Army engineer. Following the War he was awarded the O.B.E. and the American Legion of Merit for his work as Director of Operations Research, Canadian Army. Dr. Wilson is presently Professor of Geophysics at the University of Toronto and President of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics.

see. Something, perhaps, in the manner or the bearing of this big, good-natured Canadian led the authorities to grant him his wish.

After ten days sight-seeing and visiting scientific institutions in Peking, Dr. Wilson and his guide, Mr. Tien, set out for the interior. Their ultimate destination was Lanchow, China's booming new base for the development of the vast empty spaces of Singkiang.

Dr. Wilson visited universities and museums, parks and dam-sites. He climbed the Great Wall and saw the diggings where Peking Man was found. He inspected villages, examined machinery and ate black eggs for breakfast. He watched an anti-American parade and demonstration. And, above all, he talked to the Chinese and observed them at work and at play. The picture he paints of China under the Communists emerges as one of the most balanced and certainly the most entertaining that has been produced since the Revolution.

Like most observers, Dr. Wilson was impressed by the tremendous energy of the Chinese. But, unlike many, he was overwhelmed neither by uncritical enthusiasm nor by equally uncritical disgust for the new China.

While this book is abundantly good-humoured and witty throughout, Dr. Wilson reveals his more serious side in a final chapter entitled "Broad Thoughts from at Home." Here, in this post-script he reveals himself as an astute and humane commentator on the state of the world. Knowing, as a scientist, that men of different beliefs can work together in a common cause, he argues that the West should lead the way to sanity in a mad world.

The Reader's Club of Canada is proud to offer this book; **One Chinese Moon** is one of those rare volumes which is both vitally important and utterly charming reading for everyone.

**ONE CHINESE MOON** is published by Longmans, Green & Co. It has 274 pages, 15 photographs, map and index. Foreword by W.A.C.H. Dobson. Design and typography by Arnold Rockman. **One Chinese Moon** is published at \$5.50. Readers' Club member's price is \$4.25.

THIS REVIEW OF IRVING LAYTON'S *A RED CARPET FOR TWO*  
BY MILTON WILSON AND ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN *SARASOTA*  
REPRINTED HERE FOR CLUB MEMBERS BY PERMISSION FROM

### COLLECTED BELLS FOR BUOYS

BY MILTON WILSON

It was just three years and two books ago that Irving Layton, Canada's most exportable poet, published his "collected poems"—in the United States. Now he has done it again, having found a Canadian publisher this time, and having meanwhile produced forty or fifty additional poems to choose from.

There are other differences too. In this new collection of "all . . . I wish to preserve," Layton has arranged his wares in something like chronological order, selected many more early poems, restored a few later ones (like *Keewaydin Poetry Festival* and *The Buffaloes*, which should never have been left out before), and written a retrospective introduction, in which he sees all his work up to the present at forming a single, continuous, but now closed cycle.

I think he makes out a good case in the introduction. The poems do belong together and do contribute to one another, even when they happen to be trivial or immature. Like many good poets, Layton has developed by discovering with surprise, delight and horror what his previous poems really meant and then writing new ones to prove it. The best possible introduction to *Cain* is an earlier and much less successful poem, *Paraclete*; and *The Cold Green Element*, that candidate for Layton's best poem, finds its destined place half way between *The Swimmer* at the beginning of the volume and *My Flesh Comfortless* at the end.

Not the least unexpected result of reading Layton in bulk is that the sexual bravado or anti-puritanism no longer seems obsessive; we are likely to be struck with how little of it there is, rather than how much, and perhaps even to agree with the poet himself that, if he sometimes resembles D. H. Lawrence, it may be only because they have a common source in the Bible.

Five years ago a well-known Canadian critic (George Woodcock) reviewed one of Layton's best volumes and called him "negligible as a poet." Today nobody seems to be neglecting Layton, and the chorus of praise is a bit stifling and indiscriminate. However, there isn't much point in trying to underestimate a poet for whom the air can produce such images as these:

TUN WAS WRITTEN  
SADAY NIGHT. IT IS  
O SATURDAY NIGHT

A RED  
CARPET  
FOR THE  
SUN

Readers'  
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*Street lamps are the exact circuit of despair  
For light imprisoned in the black air:  
No noise of rowlocks, no ecstasy of hands,  
No sound of crickets in the inextricable air;  
and hanging from ancient twigs my murdered selves  
sparked the air like the muted collisions of fruit . . . . .*

Still, if I had to choose between Layton as image-maker and Layton as rhythm-maker I would certainly choose the latter. In the early poems his ear is often accurately tuned, even when the similes look like tired reflections of Auden. Or take the first stanza of a later poem, *The Buffaloes*:

*Autumn: the leaves? Of course they fall.  
The wind? The same dirge as last year.  
In broad daylight the mist surrounds  
Grips you like a friend's displeasure.*

The rhythm and phrasing of the opening establishes so skilfully the ironic and self-indulgent tone of the poem that the rather perfunctory simile which follows is at the very least a disappointment.

But Layton is too good a poet to have his talents listed in order of importance; and maybe the real critical point is simply that, although his poems are bound together by their common images and themes, they are kept apart and individualized by an immense variety of rhythmic impulses: delicate as well as sweeping, hesitant as well as forthright. They may be (as the introduction puts it) "leaves from the same tree," but each one is also "a definition of independence." And the independence seems to be in the thrusts and insinuations of the speaking voice, which compels the reader's attention at the first word and dismisses him with a gesture at the last. But the last word on Layton's poems must come from a Layton poem:

*though destiny who plays it safe uses always and only the same  
rigged wheel.*

*I gain incongruous poems and bells for buoys.*

A RED CARPET FOR THE SUN is published by McClelland & Steward Ltd. It is clothbound with coloured half-title pages. It contains 210 poems and a four-page introduction by the author. 242 pages. **A Red Carpet for the Sun** is published in this edition at \$5.50. **Reader's Club member's price is \$2.75.**

## AWARDS AND HONOURS OF 1959

After doing some research on book awards made in Canada in 1959, we are forced to the conclusion that there are almost as many awards as books. They range all the way from the well-known and highly regarded Governor-General's Awards to "Best book by an historian in the West" awarded by the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association.

In the field of design alone Typography '59 awards bests in eight different categories. **The St. Lawrence**, written and designed by William Toye, was named the best designed trade book of the year. **The Collected Poems of E. J. Pratt**, a Reader's Club selection, was the best designed book of poetry. It was designed by Frank Davies, and was also voted the most distinguished piece of book design of the sixteen books sent to represent Canada at the 7th International Book Design Exhibition in London last July. Other designers to win awards were Robert R. Reid, Takao Tanabe, Marion C. Paton and Frank Nefeld.

The Governor-General's awards, announced in 1959 for books published in 1958, went to Colin McDougall's **Execution** for fiction, **A Suit of Nettles** by James Reaney for poetry, **Klondike** by Pierre Berton for creative non-fiction, **The History of Fanny Burney** by Dr. Joyce Hemlow for academic non-fiction, and to Edith Lambert Sharp's Indian story **Nkwala** for the best juvenile.

It was recently announced that in future these awards will be accompanied by a cash prize of \$1,000, paid by the Canada Council, and that there will be six awards, three in French and three in English under the categories Poetry and Drama, Fiction and Drama, and Non-Fiction.

**The Golden Phoenix** Dr. Marius Barbeau's delightful collection of French-Canadian fairy tales, was voted the best of 1958 by the Canadian Association of Children's Librarians. The French equivalent of the award went to **L'Été Enchanté** by Mrs. Paule Daveluy.

This year also saw the results of the first Stratford Foundation play-writing contest. First prize of \$2500 went to Donald Jack for **To the Canvass Barricade**, which will be produced at Stratford next year. Second prize of \$1000 went to Patricia Joudry for her play **Walk Alone Together**. Toronto writer John Gray took third prize of \$750 with **The Teacher**. Although no newcomers to Canadian writing turned up among the winners, the competition at least gave hundreds of would-be playwrights something to work towards.

Something new in Canadian publishing was the first "talking book". **Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town** was recorded by John Drainie for the Canadian National Institute for The Blind. It runs for six hours.

In the Women of the Year poll Marie-Claire Blais, twenty-year-old Quebec author of a highly successful first novel, **La Belle Bête**, was tops in literature and art.

Oh yes, in case you're wondering about the best book by an historian in the West, it went to **Frontenac, the Courtier Governor**, by W. J. Eccles, which the Readers' Club also claims as one of its own.



## RECENT CLUB SELECTIONS

The following recent Club selections are still available to members at the special member's price. Any or all of these titles may be ordered in place of or in addition to this month's selection or alternate.

**PORTRAITS OF GREATNESS.** Ninety-six of Karsh's portraits of the world's truly great, reproduced in a book which has been called one of the finest ever printed. Published at \$17.50; **Member's Price, \$12.95.**

**THE DESPERATE PEOPLE.** Farley Mowat's description of the slow painful extinction of an Eskimo band through official indifference, neglect and bureaucracy. "I urge every Canadian to read *The Desperate People*" Hon. Alvin A. Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs. Published at \$5.00 **Member's Price \$4.00.**

**THE APPRENTICESHIP OF DUDDY KRAVITZ.** A new novel by Mordecai Richler, one of Canada's liveliest young writers. "My candidate for the Governor-General's Award" Robert Fulford, *Toronto Star*. Published at \$3.75 **Member's Price \$2.95.**

**DAYS OF LIVING.** The moving journal of a young man, Martin Roher, who was confined to bed with nephritis for 10 years, until his death, yet remained triumphantly undefeated. Published at \$4.00. **Member's Price \$3.15.**

**FLAME OF POWER.** Peter C. Newman's best-selling examination of eleven of Canada's most powerful businessmen. Lively and revealing, this collection of biographies of entrepreneurs is the first book of its kind in Canada. Published at \$4.95; **Member's Price, \$3.95.**

**LOOKING AT ARCHITECTURE IN CANADA.** In 232 pages and 137 plates, Alan Gowans presents the panorama of building in Canada with a masterly blend of urbane wit and scholarly thoroughness. "... so interesting that the reader can hardly lay it down." *Canadian Art*. Published at \$7.95 **Member's Price \$5.95.**

**FRONTENAC, THE COURTIER GOVERNOR.** W. J. Eccles' brilliant debunking of a major historical figure. "The real Frontenac is exposed ... whose contributions to the French Empire in North America were by-products of an unashamed desire to use his power as governor to line his pockets with beaver skins." *Canadian Literature*. Published at \$6.50 **Member's Price \$4.95.**

**ESKIMO.** Edmond Carpenter, Frederick Varley and Robert Flaherty, combine to produce a handsome and many-sided explanation of the culture of Canada's Eskimo. With photographs, water-colours and sketches, all flawlessly reproduced. Published at \$4.95 **Member's Price \$3.95.**

**CONTEMPORARY CANADA.** Miriam Chapin. "Certainly the most stimulating and assuredly the most controversial book about Canada published during this decade." *Montreal Gazette*. Published at \$7.50 **Member's Price \$5.50**

**E. J. PRATT COLLECTED POEMS.** New, enlarged second edition with introduction by Northrop Frye. "The richest and most substantial volume of poetry that Canadian literature has produced." *Toronto Star*. "Anyone can read his poems with pleasure or even excitement." *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*. Published at \$5.00 **Member's Price \$3.95.**

**CANADIANS IN THE MAKING.** Arthur R. M. Lower's vivid and lively social history of Canada. "He rips into our coziest myths and our most hallowed traditions" *Maclean's Magazine*. Published at \$7.50 **Member's Price \$5.25.**



